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Library community engagement projects bring communities together during pandemic

WLTC report highlights new and ongoing statewide library and community partnerships

MADISON — A statewide community engagement training program provided a pathway for public libraries and local partners to work together to meet community needs. [The Wisconsin Libraries Transforming Communities 2020-2021 Final Report and Evaluation released today](#) shares the outcomes of the 18-month program developed in partnership with the [American Library Association](#).

“Libraries, along with community partners, developed skills through the WLTC cohort to identify community needs and aspirations, as well as how to plan in response to those needs,” said State Librarian and DPI Assistant State Superintendent for the Division for Libraries and Technology Tessa Michaelson Schmidt. “While the pandemic shifted the original plans of the cohort, libraries were able to bring communities together and work toward common goals.”

Thirty-six coaches and team members from 14 counties in 12 different library systems were selected to participate. The program, which ran from February 2020 through August 2021, trained participants on how to build deep, authentic relationships in their community to inform the development of library policies, practices, and services. Developers intended the program to be a hybrid of in-person trainings and webinars, which turned to all virtual due to the pandemic. Despite the redirection of the project, libraries brought communities together to address issues identified in community conversations. In Kenosha, team members created a video series of interviews with diverse community leaders to showcase the city’s unique culture. In Marinette County, after community conversations revealed a need for better internet access, the library system raised awareness and improved access to a community internet hotspot.

For more information on WLTC, visit the [DPI's website here](#), or go to [Team Spotlights here](#) for more project details.

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NOTE: This news release is available electronically at <https://dpi.wi.gov/news/releases/2022/library-community-engagement-projects-report>.